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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 4, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: DAVID GOMPERT
FROM: MARGI VANDERHART *non*
SUBJECT: Proposed Presidential Statement

This afternoon at a 4:30 p.m. press conference in New York City, the Executive Committee of the U. S. Catholic Conference issued the attached statement on behalf of the Catholic dioceses throughout the country.

AID brought the announced statement to our attention and said that it had received press coverage. In view of this show of support, we recommend with AID's concurrence that the President issue a statement expressing appreciation for the support of the Conference and commendation for their efforts. A suggested Presidential message approved by General Scowcroft is also attached.

If HAK concurs, please pass authority for release to Ron Nessen.

Attachments

PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT ON THE
STATEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
U.S. CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

I am deeply grateful for the support that the Executive Committee of the U.S. Catholic Conference today demonstrated for our efforts to evacuate the war orphans and abandoned children of South Vietnam. I commend their willingness to meet this urgent humanitarian need.

We will do our utmost through the Agency for International Development to ensure that orphans presently under the care of Catholic Relief Services and other voluntary organizations will be joined with the thousands of Americans who have opened their homes to these children.

As the Committee has stated, it is indeed paramount that the United Nations, and the international community at large, seek to permit the humanitarian efforts of nations and voluntary agencies to bring relief to these masses of refugees and allow them to reach places of safety.

FYI: Conference statement in New York this afternoon was as follows:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STATEMENT

We are reassured by the statements of President Ford yesterday pledging the full cooperation of our Government to assist in the evacuation of war orphans and the abandoned children of South Vietnam. We pledge the utmost continuing effort of the Catholic Relief Services and, indeed, of the entire American Catholic community to meet this urgent humanitarian challenge. Catholic Relief Services and other voluntary agencies today care for more than 4,000 adoptable orphaned and abandoned children in South Vietnam. We are hopeful that our Government will make it possible for these children to be flown to the U. S. where homes and hearts are open to them and that it will show to them the same generosity that our Government afforded refugees from Cuba and Hungary.

At this critical moment of suffering and family disruption in South Vietnam, we urge the Secretary General and the leaders of the United Nations to use all their good offices to persuade the parties involved in Southeast Asia to permit the humanitarian efforts of nations and voluntary agencies to bring relief to these masses of refugees and to allow them to reach places of safety.